

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 136818

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 136818

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, MILI, OTRA

SUBJECT: GAO REVIEW OF XM-1 TANK PROGRAM

1. PURSUANT TO A REQUEST BY SENATOR EAGLETON AND REPRESENTATIVE ASPEN, THE GAO IS REVIEWING THE US ARMY'S XM-1 TANK PROGRAM. THE CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY RAISED QUESTIONS REGARDING ALTERNATIVE TANKS DEVELOPED IN NATO, STANDARDIZATION OF TANKS WITHIN NATO, DIFFERENCES IN TANK CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 136818

DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS, THE POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF XM-1 TANK BY NATO COUNTRIES, THE R&D INVESTMENT OF NATO MEMBER NATIONS IN A NEXT GENERATION TANK AND VARIOUS FORCE MIX CONSIDERATIONS.

2. GAO AUDITORS CONDUCTING THE STUDY ARE HYMAN S. BARAS AND HUGH R. STRAIN. THEY WISH TO TRAVEL TO EUROPE FROM JUNE 18 THROUGH JULY 3 AND TALK TO OFFICIALS IN GERMAN, UK, AND FRENCH MOD'S, AS WELL AS NATO OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH CNAD'S AND MILITARY STANDARDIZATION. THEY WISH TO VISIT THE SHAPE TECHNICAL CENTER AT THE HAGUE. IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN OFFICIALS, THEY PLAN TO SEEK VIEWS AND INFORMATION CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING:

A. THE TANK'S ROLE IN THE 1980'S VIS-A-VIS OTHER AVAILABLE OFFENSIVE WEAPONS.

B. IDEAL FORCE MIX FOR A USUAL TANK OPERATION.

C. VARIATIONS IN KILL RATIO WHEN ANTI-TANK WEAPONS FIRE FROM ABOVE.

D. COST EFFECTIVENESS OF 105MM, 110MM AND 120MM GUNS.

E. PROS AND CONS OF A HEAVILY ARMORED TANK VERSUS A MORE AGILE, LIGHTER TANK.

F. RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION TO SURVIVABILITY OF PROTECTION, AGILITY AND FIREPOWER.

G. HEAD-TO-HEAD TESTING OF LEOPARD II AND XM-1 (GERMAN MOD ONLY).

H. PRODUCTABILITY OF LEOPARD IN THE US (GERMAN MOD ONLY).

I. LEOPARD'S OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN WARMER CLIMATES (GERMAN MOD ONLY).

J. PROS AND CONS OF A STANDARDIZED NATO TANK IN TERMS OF COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS AND REDUCED COST.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 136818

3. ACTION ADDRESSEES SHOULD FACILITATE EFFORTS BY BARAS AND STRAIN TO DEVELOP INFORMATION ON FOREIGN MOD'S VIEWS. IF IN JUDGMENT OF ANY ADDRESSEE DISCUSSIONS OF THESE ISSUES WITH MOD'S OR OTHER FOREIGN OFFICIALS WOULD PRESENT DIFFICULTIES OR COULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, THEN ADDRESSEES SHOULD PROVIDE AS MUCH INFORMATION AS CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH US OFFICIALS AND SOURCES. BOTH BARAS AND STRAIN UNDERSTAND THAT ADDRESSEES WILL ARRANGE MOD AND NATO CONTACTS AND MAY WISH TO HAVE OFFICER FROM EMBASSY ACCOMPANY.

4. TRAVEL PLANS OF BARAS AND STRAIN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

6/23 - LONDON - BRITISH MOD

6/24 - BONN - GERMAN MOD

6/25 - MUNICH - KRAUSS MAFFEI

6/26 - BRUNSSUN - AFCENT

MONS - SHAPE

6/27 - BRUSSELS - 1) NATIONAL ARMAMENTS REPS AND

2) MILITARY AGENCY FOR STANDARDIZATION

6/30 - PARIS - FRENCH MOD

7/1 - THE HAGUE - SHAPE TECHNICAL CENTER

5. NO HOTEL OR OTHER ARRANGEMENTS NEED BE MADE BY
ADDRESSEES. HOWEVER, WE WOULD APPRECIATE NAME OF CONTROL

OFFICER IN ADVANCE OF THEIR DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON AND
ANY OTHER INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE PERTINENT TO THIS
PARTICULAR PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS ARISING
IN COURSE OF REVIEW SHOULD BE REFERRED TO DEPARTMENT. KISSINGER

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